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Last Updated: Friday, 13 May, 2005, 14:43 GMT 15:43 UK

[E-mail this to a friend](#)[Printable version](#)**Woman cleared over 'witch' trial****A woman accused of helping torture an Angolan girl accused of being a witch by her family has been cleared.**

The case against Kiwonde Kiese, 21, was dropped after the alleged victim withdrew claims of abuse.



The case against Kiwonde Kiese was dropped

Ms Kiese, of Stoke Newington, north London, had denied aiding and abetting cruelty to the eight-year-old child.

Kiese's partner, Sebastian Pinto, 33, his sister Sita Kisanga, 35, of Hackney, east London, and the girl's aunt, 39, deny child cruelty.

The girl's aunt cannot be named for legal reasons.

The aunt and Ms Kisanga also deny conspiracy to kill after the girl alleged she was put into a laundry bag and was about to be thrown into a river.

The girl, who was orphaned during the Angolan civil war, had been brought to the UK in 2002 by her aunt, who had claimed to be her mother.

Sole allegation

After the girl, who also cannot be named, was cross-examined by her solicitor advocate, Hugh Mullen, she withdrew the allegation that Ms Kiese had rubbed chilli pepper in her eyes.

The jury heard the allegation had come from a third interview with the police, but that it had been the only allegation the girl had made against Ms Kiese.

The girl today told Mr Mullen: "She does not have anything to do with it really. She never rubbed peppers in my eye. She never really used to hit me."

The prosecution had alleged the girl was beaten with a shoe and a belt, left without food and had chillies rubbed in her eyes after being accused of being a witch.

In November 2003, the girl was found with swollen eyes and bruises, sitting barefoot on stairs in the Woodberry Down Estate in Hackney.

She said she was saved when Mr Pinto told the women they be jailed if they "threw her away" into the water from the

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third floor flat.

The trial involving Mr Pinto, Ms Kisanga and the girl's aunt continues.

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